

National Catholic Theatre Conference

PRODUCTION CALENDAR

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EXTENSION OF PLAY CONTEST RULES

An inquiry from Dublin asking permission to submit a script for the Bishop Sheil Drama Award has induced the Executive Committee to extend the geographical limits of the contest. It was never the intention of the committee framing rules to eliminate scripts in English submitted from any point, but the committee had no plan for international publicity -- Canada and the United States were named specifically because they covered the membership field. It is now to be understood that a script written in English may be mailed from any country.

Actually the Conference seeks scripts of servicement away from home, and the Publicity Committee will direct a strenuous campaign this month to obtain wider release on the contest.

Members of the Conference can aid the campaign substantially by giving local publicity to the Award. The play you will want to produce next fall may be in the hands of one of your neighbors. If it has not been written, this is your last chance to persuade the playwright to start work.

Remember--a full length play, running time $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 hours, of any type. For extra copies of the complete rules write to the Service Bureau.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

The first of the semi-annual Executive Board Meetings in an all-day session on December 28 at Mrs. Wyatt's home cleared an accumulation of old business from the desk and set into motion plans for an active Regional and Diocesan program to be backed by a firm publicity campaign.

Coming from a distance to accomplish the work were Father Donohue, Chairman, Father Schroeder (as Therese M. Cuny's proxy), Sister Mary Honora, O.P., and Margaret Passmore. Very Rev. Msgr. L. A. McNeil fortunately was in New York and did not need to bombard railroads and hotels at the holiday season. Father Nagle, O.P., Mrs. Wyatt and Helen Purcell completed the quorum, with Helen Feeney, Regional Director of Mid-Atlantic States, Margaret Heslin, Director of Publicity, Florence McBride, Assistant Treasurer, and Paul Lilly lending assistance as advisory members at varied stages of the discussion.

The eagerness of the members to fix the date of the next meeting was proof of the success of the initial gathering. June 8 or as near as possible thereto, was selected for a meeting at Detroit.

Among measures advocated by the Board was the preparation of a date sheet on the Conference which would be readily available to those writing or speaking on NCTC-- the Publicity Committee hopes there will be many. A brief folder also will be prepared for the handling of casual inquiries not warranting the mailing of the Bulletin.

The importance of connecting NCTC with local activity was stressed, and the Board asked that the Calendar emphasize the importance of awakening individuals within the groups and in their communities to their share in the national organization (see p. 4).

To satisfy the Calendar editor's hunger for news, the Board recommended the attached postcard questionnaire inaugurated with this issue (see p. 4).

The Board favored publication of a 1946 Bulletin, but the Hows and Whos of publication can be determined only after investigation. It was felt that the Conference could not afford so soon again an expenditure of this amount without some attempt to liquidate the cost. (You will hear more of the 1946 Bulletin; meanwhile be sure you have film on hand for your

best production, and watch for the column on Stage Photography in the February issue.)

Mrs. Wyatt offered to attempt to obtain the services of a famous artist to design a trademark of the Conference - the symbol of the Patron to be designated by voice of the Conference (see, p. 4).

All past transactions of the Board, the term applied to decisions reached by correspondence since June, which have been carefully recorded by the Chairman, were ratified.

Father Donohue in resigning as Chairman of the Play Listing Committee, whose work must continue for future supplements of the list and for the play-reading service nominated Rev. John Walsh, S.J. as Chairman of the Committee which will continue to include: Rev. F. E. Marlin, Rev. Urban Nagle, O.P., Mrs. Christopher Wyatt, Sister Mary Donatus, I.H.M., and Helen Purcell. It was so moved in the hope that Father Walsh would find it possible to accept the post while pursuing his theological studies.

As a step toward regional organization it was agreed that letters should be sent to Regional Chairmen asking them a) to arrange a major public occasion in their respective regions during 1946 (convention, seminar, or similar gathering); b) to promote membership by personal contacts; c) to send to headquarters a list of solid prospects.

It was decided that an attempt should be made to enlist the services of experts within the Conference in grade-school theatre to build service for that level.

In the discussion of diocesan organization, recognition was given to the successful operation of the Catholic Music Educators Association, which is cut to the same pattern as the NCTC constitutional order regarding diocesan units. Msgr. McNeill's experience with the Wichita Unit of NCTC was most helpful in the discussion. On the agreement that the Chairman would deal with the problem of diocesan organization as soon as possible along the lines of the Executive Board's recommendations, the meeting was adjourned.

Year-end total: 133 Group Members and 88 Individual Members of NCTC

COMMEDIA DELL'ARTE

(From C.U.'s playbill for "The Liar")

"This is both an old and a new play. As an old one, it is a commedia dell'arte, one of the very last of them. The commedia, you see, was a very popular kind of theatre for three centuries - the 16th, 17th, and 18th - in which the actors improvised their lines and always played the same characters. Among those characters who had three hundred years of stage life were Pantalone, Arlecchino, The Doctor, Colombina, The Boastful Coward, and Lelio, and you will find them all in this play. "The Liar" is a little bit different, though, from the regular commedia dell'arte. It wasn't improvised; it was written down. Carlo Goldoni (1707-93) was the man who wrote it down, and, in the very act, put an end to the spontaneous commedia and made a beginning for Italian Literary light comedy. But, before Goldoni had done his work, which was both a sad and happy thing, the commedia had impressed its style on Shakespeare, Lope de Vega, and, most emphatically of all Moliere. Moliere's characters are these very same people, with new names.

"As a new play "The Liar" is not only a fresh translation, but a real adaptation. In our opinion, it is even somewhat closer to the original commedia spirit than Goldoni's play was. Moreover, it has been given a musical score in the delicate, yet vigorously gay, manner of the 18th century form. This work has been done by Edward Eager, Alfred Drake, and John Mundy.

"Anyone who has ever read about the commedia dell'arte is almost automatically in love with it. It is pure theatre, frank theatre, play for play's sake and let the serious man go hang. Or, rather, let him come to the theatre and stop being so serious all the time. It asks nothing more than fun, and hopes to give nothing more. Indeed the actors themselves, with their tongues in their cheeks, traditionally had as good a time as anyone. But the unfortunate fact about the commedia is that, normally, we do have to read about it, can only read about it. And for that reason C.U. is grateful to the Messrs. Eager, Drake and Mundy. They have allowed us to see a commedia.

SPRINGFIELD'S COMMUNITY THEATRE

Springfield Little Theatre Players, Inc. proudly announces the foundation of a Community Theatre. Springfield Junior College played host to the officers of the incorporated Players for the formal debut.

A substantial sinking fund has been established and present plans call for a new building to house theatre and radio.

A revival of "The Bishop Misbehaves" has been chosen for the first production, and the Players are promised the assistance of Mr. Henry House in the title role. Mr. House was one time secretary to Richard Mansfield, the promoter and president of the now defunct Springfield Community Players and has played summer stock at Toronto. His experience in theatre includes producing, acting, play criticism and play writing.

The community project has long been the goal of Mother Alphonse, O.S.U., sponsor of the Players.

"THE MAGNIFICENT YANKEE"

Reports of the Washington showing of Emmet Lavery's "The Magnificent Yankee" realize the good wishes of all NCTC members as relayed to Mr. Lavery by the Executive Board in a telegram prior to the play's opening at Wilmington. "New York Times" correspondent says in part "Most moving in a profoundly moving play is the story of the life together of the Justice and his wife, a marital epic pictured with delightful simplicity and restraint."

Following its Washington run "Yankee" moves to Philadelphia January 8 for two-week engagement before its New York debut.

Please do not ask us for a copy of the script. It is not available at present.

"IN THE BEGINNING"

Baker has published this trilogy of one act plays by Isabel Barr, graduate of New Rochelle College, based on the Nativity, Crucifixion, and Resurrection. Alfred Kroymborg, in its preface, praises "an original work from the heart of a woman of our time."

Former Catholic Theatre of Detroiters staged a big reunion in New York with Margaret Passmore and Paul Lilly in town.

PATRON OF NCTC

The Executive Board is discussing the advantage of choosing a patronal saint for the Conference and of formalizing a symbol of the patron for Conference stationery and printing, welcomed a suggestion made by Sister Honora that all members be given a voice in the selection.

At the Board meeting, St. Genesius and St. Thomas More were suggested. Have you other nominations? The secretary will welcome your recommendation before January 25.

The February Calendar will list all suggestions, and you will be asked at that time to vote your preference.

PROCLAIM YOUR MEMBERSHIP

A line on your producing group's stationery and playbills, and in releases via press or radio proclaiming your membership in the Conference can do more to personalize the national organization for your audience than any medium of publicity at NCTC's disposal.

Bring home to the people in your community the force of Catholic Theatre, the nationwide effort to make evenings in the theatre more worthwhile for audience and players by identifying your efforts with NCTC in your school, local and diocesan papers.

Margaret Passmore, NCTC's Vice-Chairman, speaking for the universal adoption of this practice, says: "Catholic Theatre of Detroit has always been convinced that the statement of our membership in NCTC adds to our prestige."

POSTAL QUESTIONNAIRE

The enclosed stamped postcard is an experiment. If the response justifies, cards will be sent to group members each month asking news for the following Production Calendar....What will you do in February?...Dates?...and a regrettably small space for additional remarks.

The news of your group activities need not be limited to the space provided. Interesting news stories running over to a separate sheet will always be welcome. The editor, however, does want each one of the current 133 group members to be represented in the Calendar during the year. Mail your schedule for February today!

CROSS-COUNTRY CIRCUIT - JANUARY

Philadelphia - The Barst Players in a production of "The King's Jongleur" on January 13 are driving energetically to top all past totals for benefit performances. The funds earned will buy food and vitamins for the starving Religious of the Sacred Heart and their pupils in the devastated areas of Europe.

Springfield, Ill. - Rev. K. G. Schroeder will serve as a judge in the CYO Diocesan Dramatic Finals on Sunday, Jan. 13. Five District Winners will present one-act plays.

New York - Blackfriars' Guild opens "A Young American," a comedy built on serious American problems and set in the home of a symphony conductor, on Jan. 17 for the usual three weeks' run.

Davenport - Freshman Cameo Players at Immaculate Conception Academy, take their first bows on Jan. 24. Three one-acts are scheduled: "Lucky Penny," "Just for Justin," and "Buried Treasure." The Juniors attractive green-linked Christmas playbill underscored Cameo Players' membership in the Conference.

St. Martin, Ohio "St. Germaine," Sister Miriam's adaptation of the Gheon Story published by Sheed & Ward is scheduled for production the third week of January at School of the Brown County Ursulines.

Convent, N. J. - The Dramatic Association with all departments of the College of St. Elizabeth begins work this month on a production of "Iphigenia among the Taurians" destined for spring performances in Convent's beautiful Greek theatre.

BROADWAY COMMENTS

By Mrs. Christopher Wyatt

Dream Girl - Wittily written, beautifully staged, well acted, light comedy.

Dunnigan's Daughter - Disappointing, over written comedy, with confused philosophy.

Hamlet - Swift and exciting performance, excellently staged. Hamlet a soldier and no poet.

Home of the Brave - Sincere and moving play extremely well acted and very repertitious.

Pygmalion - Unusual and memorable production of Shaw's great comedy.

The French Touch - Trite and vulgar farce. Couldn't be worse acted or directed.

